

## **SEPARATE STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER KEVIN J. MARTIN**

*Re: Review of the Emergency Alert System, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (August 4, 2004)*

The importance of our ability to quickly and effectively inform the public of an emergency cannot be understated. Whether the issue is a terrorist attack or impending weather disaster, our success in this endeavor can mean the difference between life and death. Currently, we rely almost exclusively on the Emergency Alert System to disseminate warnings to the public. EAS therefore serves a critical purpose, yet it applies only to analog broadcast and cable television and its use is, in many instances, merely voluntary. We need either to update this system or to replace it with a more comprehensive and effective digital warning mechanism.

I strongly support initiation of this rulemaking to determine the best solution to ensure that all Americans can receive emergency information. I am pleased at the coordination that has taken place to date with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Commerce, and I look forward to working with these partners as well as our colleagues at the state and local level to develop the best system to protect the American people.